

Message Text

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PAGE 01 QUEBEC 00084 151407Z
ACTION EUR-12

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E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: PEPR, PINT, CA
SUBJECT: LEVESQUE WILL CALLOFF AFRICA TRIP

REF: 77 QUEBEC 470, 77 DAKAR 8460

1. PRIME MINISTER LEVESQUE'S SPECIAL ADVISOR FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS, YVES MICHAUD, HAS TOLD ME PRIVATELY THAT LEVESQUE'S ANTICIPATED TRIP TO AFRICA THIS YEAR (REFTELS) WILL ALMOST CERTAINLY NOT RPT NOT TAKE PLACE. TRIP PLANS HAVE BEEN SCRAPPED, MICHAUD SAID, IN THE WAKE OF OTTAWA'S REFUSAL TO GRANT PERMISSION TO QUEBEC TO OPEN A DELEGATION IN DAKAR (OTTAWA 0956 NOTAL).

2. THE DAKAR DELEGATION ISSUE CONTINUES TO RANKLE HERE. IN RECENT SPEECH ON QUEBEC'S INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS (SEPTTEL) INTERGOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS MINISTER CLAUDE MORIN COMPLAINED ABOUT OTTAWA'S "PARANOIS" OVER QUEBEC'S FOREIGN REPRESENTATION. "IT IS NO LONGER THE CASE THAT QUEBECOIS WANT TO
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PAGE 02 QUEBEC 00084 151407Z

ISOLATE THEMSELVES FROM THE REST OF THE WORK," MORIN SAID, "IT IS NOW OTTAWA THAT IS ATTEMPTING TO DO IT FOR US. THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT IS OPERATING ON THE FALSE ASSUMPTION THAT, FOR US, THE QUEBEC PRESENCE OVERSEAS IS A WAY TO RESOLVE, TO OUR ADVANTAGE, THE CONSTITUTIONAL PROBLEMS OF CANADA." QUEBEC WILL DECIDE ITS OWN FUTURE, MORIN CONTINUED, AND HAD NO INTENTION OF SEEKING SUPPORT ABROAD FOR ITS CONSTITUT-

IONAL POSITION. MORIN JIBED THAT "IT WAS BECOMING DIFFICULT TO KNOW WHO TO LISTEN TO IN OTTAWA." MINEXTAFF JAMIESON HAD TURNED DOWN QUEBEC-S REQUEST TO SET UP A DELEGATION BUT HAD PROPOSED INSTEAD A QUEBEC PRESENCE IN THE CANADIAN EMBASSY AT DAKAR. TWO DAYS LATER TRUDEAU TOLD THE PRESS THAT QUEBEC'S REQUEST HAD BEEN REFUSED FLATLY. "WHAT IS THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT'S REAL POSITION?" MORIN ASKED. (INCIDENTALLY, MICHAUD TOLD ME WITH SOME AMUSEMENT THAT THE GOQ HAD REPLIED TO JAMIESON'S PROPOSAL BY REQUESTING SPACE FOR SOME FIFTEEN QUEBECOIS IN A CANADIAN EMBASSY OF NINE PERSONS.)

3. COMMENT: THE CANCELLATION OF LEVESQUE'S AFRICAN TRIP PROBABLY MARKS A PAUSE IN QUEBEC'S INTENSE EFFORTS TO MAKE HEADWAY WITH AFRICA'S FRANCOPHONE NATIONS. NEVERTHELESS QUEBEC'S RESIDUAL INTEREST IN AFRICA REMAINS STRONG. WE ARE TOLD THAT VICE-PRIME MINISTER AND MINISTER OF EDUCATION JACQUES-YVAN MORIN STOPPED OVER IN DAKAR TO CALL ON PRESIDENT SENGHOR RECENTLY EN ROUTE TO A CONFERENCE OF FRANCOPHONE EDUCATION MINISTERS IN OUGADOUGOU. AND CLAUDE MORIN MADE A POINT OF SPECIFYING IN HIS SPEECH THAT A SOVEREIGN QUEBEC WOULD SET UP ITS OWN FOREIGN AID PROGRAM THAT WOULD, AT A MINIMUM, MAINTAIN QUEBEC'S CURRENT LEVEL OF AID CONTRIBUTIONS.
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